

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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SUBJECT: BETICO CROES DISCUSSES THE ARUBA SITUATION

REF: CURACAO A-5 OF MARCH 8, 1978

1. SUMMARY BETICO CROES SEES NO WAY TO RECONCILE ARUBAN ASPIRATIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE (I.E. A SEPARATE RELATIONSHIP WITH HOLLAND OUTSIDE OF THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES) WITH THE NEW NETHERLANDS ANTILLES GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM. HE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT TIME IS NOT ON HIS SIDE, SINCNARUBA MUST ACHIEVE ITS INDEPENDENCE BEFORE THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES AS A WHOLE DO. TIME IS PROPITIOUS FOR ARUBANS, HOWEVER, BECAUSE SELF DETERMINATION, ON WHICH THEY BASE THEIR CASE, IS BASIC TENET OF HUMAN RIGHTS. BETICO SAYS THAT NO ONE ELSE IN MEP CAN REPLACE HIM AND THAT IF HE FALLS FROM THE PICTURE HIS FORMER ALLY, WATTY VOS, WOULD COALESCE HIS OWN PARTY WITH MEP AND TAKE OVER LEADERSHIP OF ARUBAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY

2. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION BETICO CROES MADE FOLLOWING POINTS TO CONGEN:

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A. THERE IS NO WAY UNDER ROZENDAL GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM (CURACAO A-5) THAT CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE WORKED OUT THAT WILL SATISFY ARUBANS IN GENERAL AND MEP IN PARTICULAR ON ARUBAN INDEPENDENCE ISSUE. NEW PROGRAM CONTEMPLATES NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN ISLANDS, BUT MAINTAIN PRINCIPLE, UNACCEPTABLE TO ARUBANS, THAT ONLY DIRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH HOLLAND IS THAT OF THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES AS A WHOLE.

B. ARUBA MUST WIN ITS INDEPENDENCE, I.E. ITS OWN SEPARATE AND DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TO HOLLAND IDENTICAL WITH THAT NOW ENJOYED BY THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES AS A WHOLE, BEFORE THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES ACHIEVES ITS INDEPENDENCE. IF ARUBA GAINS ITS INDEPENDENCE FIRST, IT WILL BY DEFINITION HAVE WITH HOLLAND A DIRECT RELATIONSHIP INVOLVING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF ARUBA DOES NOT SUCCEED IN CREATING ITS OWN RELATIONSHIP WITH HOLLAND BEFORE THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES BECOMES INDEPENDENT, ARUBA WILL HAVE LOST ANY CHANCE OF A SEPARATE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP WITH HOLLAND.

C. TWO FACTORS MAKE TIME PROPITIOUS FOR ARUBAN ASPIRATIONS NOW. THERE IS WORLD-WIDE FOCUS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ARUBANS BASE THEIR CASE ON SELF DETERMINATION, A "GENERALLY ACCEPTED TENET OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS." CROES REGARDS NEIGHBORING VENEZUELA AS PARTICULARLY COMMITTED TO THIS PRINCIPLE. HE REGARDS ARUBAN CASE AS STRONG BECAUSE PRESENT UNITY OF NETHERLANDS ANTILLES IS MERELY MATTER OF HISTORICAL ACCIDENT AND HISTORY OF DOMINATION OF OTHER ANTILLEAN ISLANDS BY CURACAO CANNOT BE DISPUTED. HE DID NOT MENTION RACIAL DIFFERENCES AS A PARTICLDOS UND FOR INVOKING THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF DETERMINATION, ALTHOUGH SUCH DIFFERENCES ARE ON MANY ARUBANS' MINDS.

D. IF ARUBA DOES ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE WITH DIRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH HOLLAND, ARUBA WOULD BE WILLING TO CONTINUE TO CONTRILIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUTE TO THE ECONOMIES OF BONAIRE AND THE WINDWARD ISLANDS. ON OTHER OCCASIONS MAKING THIS POINT CROES HAS ALWAYS ADDED SOME SUCH PHRASE AS "AS LONG AS IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO DO SO." IN THIS CONVERSATION HE DECLINED TO BE SO SPECIFIC. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE ILLUSORY NATURE OF THE COMMITMENT, AS HERETOFORE ARTICULATED BY CROES, HAS BEEN PICKED UP AND USED AGAINST HIM. HE IS APPARENTLY TRYING NOW TO GIVE IMPRESSION OF A MORE UNEQUIVOCAL EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT TO THE LESS-ECONOMICALLY DEVELOPED ISLANDS OF THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES.

E. NO OTHER MEP LEADER CAN SUCCEED BETICO CROES. IN EVENT IF HIS DEMISE, MEP AND WATTY VOS' PARTY WOULD COALESCE BEHIND VOS. OBJECTIVE OF COALITION WOULD CONTINUE TOHBE INDEPENDENCE A LA BETICO. CROES RECALLED THAT HE AND VOS HAD EARLIER BEEN ALLIES BUT HAD FALLEN OUT; THEIR "DIFFERENCES ARE PERSONAL." PENBERTHY

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